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NEWS RELEASE
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OHS Launches 10th Annual Safe Family Holiday Campaign with Thanksgiving Enforcement Blitz

Dover – Seven sobriety checkpoints, 69 DUI saturation patrols and 68 patrols that target speeding, aggressive and unbelted drivers - including team enforcement near high traffic shopping areas - are scheduled for the first big weekend of the holiday season. Twenty-one State, County and municipal police agencies are partnering with the Delaware Office of Highway Safety for an all out Thanksgiving enforcement blitz, as OHS kicks off its 10th annual Safe Family Holiday Campaign.

The Safe Family Holiday Campaign, which runs from Thanksgiving Eve to New Year's Day, is OHS' major traffic safety initiative for the holiday season. It includes a combination of high visibility enforcement, public awareness activities, and media messaging aimed at stopping impaired and other dangerous drivers.

Over the next six weeks, law enforcement statewide will conduct a total of 33 sobriety checkpoints, and 292 DUI Saturation patrols. Last year during the Safe Family Holiday Campaign, officers arrested 185 individuals for Driving Under the Influence of alcohol/drugs. But highway safety officials know it's not just alcohol that is killing and injuring First State citizens.

"We are urging motorists to give their full attention to the task of driving starting immediately," says Tricia Roberts, Director of the Office of Highway Safety. "Traffic always increases during the holidays, and everyone is more distracted. Combined with the early winter weather we've been having which has triggered many injury crashes, this could be a recipe for disaster if everyone doesn't buckle up, slow down, minimize distractions while driving and use a lot of common sense behind the wheel in the coming weeks."

Since January 1st of this year, 114 people have lost their lives in Delaware traffic crashes, which is a slight increase compared to this time last year when 111 people had been killed. Although alcohol-related traffic deaths are currently down, as we head into a peak time of the year for impaired driving crashes, sadly, so far this year, 41 (36%) of people killed have died in impaired driving crashes, compared to 52 (or 47%) of those killed at this time last year.

Delaware's law enforcement and corporate communities will stay informed about the status of holiday highway safety activities through weekly bulletins distributed by OHS. Additionally, billboards, radio, internet and T.V. messages will complement enforcement activities and raise the public's awareness about the penalties for DUI.

Over the last decade, several public awareness activities have become Safe Family Holiday traditions...including the OHS “Mocktail” party. “Mocktails” are non-alcoholic cocktail parties, where safety information, responsible party hosting tips, and samples of “smart” party foods will be provided. Nine mocktail events are currently scheduled at locations statewide including hospitals, Mr. Go Glass in Lewes, and select corporations.

Another popular SFH Campaign tradition is the DUI Victim’s Trees project. There is one DUI Victim’s Tree in all four DMV locations statewide. The DUI Victim’s Tree memorializes alcohol-related deaths and injuries during the campaign period by placing colored light bulbs on the tree to represent each victim. Last year, two people were killed and 88 injured in alcohol-related crashes in Delaware during the holiday season.

Finally, OHS will continue to promote its partnership with the HERO campaign for Designated Drivers. Bars and restaurants throughout the state will be provided with display materials and a plan for promoting designated drivers within their business. HERO Designated Driver pledge cards will be distributed at Mocktail Parties and through corporate outreach. Additionally, OHS has created a special HERO page on its website for the public to see and get more information about how they can be a HERO this holiday season.

The following is a list of activities that the Delaware Office of Highway Safety has planned for its tenth annual Safe Family Holiday campaign.

- **DUI Checkpoints** – weekly November 26 – Jan. 1
- **DUI Saturation patrols** – December 13 – 31, as part of the national “Drunk Driving. Over the Limit Under Arrest.” National mobilization.
- **Christmas Tree Tag Distribution** - OHS will distribute tags with a "don't drink and drive" message on them to local Christmas tree farmers during the first week in December.
- **Mocktail Parties** – OHS will hold nine non-alcoholic cocktail or “mocktail” parties this year. The Mocktail at Mr. Go Glass, behind the WaWa on Rt. 1 south, in Lewes is open to the public and will include interactive activities including fatal vision goggle demonstrations and the use of the SIDNE go-cart.
- **DUI Victim’s Tree** - A highly successful project now in its tenth year is in all four Delaware counties. Each red light on the tree will symbolize an alcohol-related death, and each green bulb an alcohol-related injury in Delaware during the **Safe Family Holiday** campaign. Trees will be located in the lobby of the Dover DMV, the Georgetown DMV, and the Wilmington DMV and the

For more information on these or any of our other Safe Family Holiday campaign efforts contact OHS at (302) 744-2740 or visit our website in the coming weeks for updates at www.ohs.delaware.gov.

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